

Providing Academic Ambience in Education Institutions

Learning environment in education institutions is a fundamental requirement to mold the character of a student during formative years. All efforts should therefore be made by the regulating authority to insulate the education institutions from exposure to disturbing influences that undermine the very purpose of education.

One such adverse practice is the occurrence of liquor bars/pubs and other such vendors in the vicinity of the educational institutions. In fact such bars/pubs in rural areas have also turned into transacting in drugs; they have turned into dens of crime negatively affecting the not only the lives of students but also the future of nation.

It is necessary to adopt a policy package to stem this social evil:

1. Impose a ban on pubs/bars and other such liquor vending/dispensing shops within at least a distance of 1 km from an educational institution.
2. For the above purpose, required amendment may be made in the State Excise Act to overcome the restraining ruling of the hon'ble high court, if any
3. To protect the mind of students from the negative onslaught on their young minds, professional psychological counseling may be provided.
4. At any cost, no lenience may be allowed to the pernicious practice in the guise of providing psychological counseling as compensation to (1) above.

Relevance to NEP

The sections of NEP cited in support of establishing an administrative tribunal will also hold good.

Analytical comments

Providing an academic ambience in education institutions, free of negative influences, is a social obligation of the government. The problem seems to have arisen because the concerned departments are not engaged in a meaningful dialogue to evolve a holistic policy. Attention of the government is also drawn to the drug menace which has acquired national dimensions in recent times.

Recommendations

The government, in the best interest of students, should take a value based decision to view both the issues holistically and reconfigure the policy of permitting educational institutions and liquor licenses. Obviously, education should be prioritized to move towards a knowledge economy, guided by moral principles.